



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

September 30, 2011

Mr. Martin C. Knopp
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
545 John Knox Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Subject: Crosstown Parkway Extension, St. Lucie County, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Federal Aid Project No. 7777-087-A
Financial Project Number: 410844-1-A8-1
FHWA-FL-EIS-2010-XXD

Dear Mr. Knopp:

Thank you for your interagency coordination efforts on this proposed project. Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA Region 4 has evaluated the consequences of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposal to Extend the Crosstown Parkway from Manth Lane on the west, across the North Fork St. Lucie River to U.S. 1 on the east a distance of approximately 2 miles, in the City of Port St. Lucie, Florida (St. Lucie County).

Alternatives under consideration include No Build Alternative, transportation system management alternatives, and multiple build alternatives that provide a river crossing on a new alignment.

Enclosed are comments on the DEIS. Based on our review of the DEIS, the USEPA assigned a rating of "EC-2" to the document. Substantial impacts on natural resources seem to exist, specifically, wetlands and listed species. Impacts should continue to be addressed based on full compensatory mitigation plan. Other significant impacts include community cohesion social impacts. The USEPA believes that alternatives 6A and 6B are the environmentally preferable alternatives. The USEPA commends FDOT's public involvement efforts, and looks forward to continue to work with FDOT and other stakeholders to complete the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS. If you have questions on our comments or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Maher Budeir at (404) 562-9514 or budeir.maher@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Mueller', written over a horizontal line.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Policy and Management

Enclosure 1: Comments on Crosstown parkway Extension DEIS.

cc: Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E., FDOT, District 4
Ron Miedema, USEPA, South Florida Office.

Comments on the Crosstown Parkway Extension DEIS

1.4.2.1.5 Cost Estimates (All Build Alternatives) (pg 1.17) Mitigation costs of 8.2 million for each alternative is misleading. Total wetland functional losses range from 7.02 to 11.08 acres (Table 1.1) between the six alternatives. Therefore, wetland mitigation costs to offset each of the alternatives should be different. Please explain why mitigation costs are the same when functional losses are different.

3.2.2.2.4.1 Bridge Typical Section (pg 3.25) The DEIS states, “A proposed 10-foot 11-inch gap between the two structures is required to allow inspection of the upper deck and superstructure by the FDOT using a truck mounted mechanical arm platform.” In order to avoid additional shading and wetland impacts, USEPA requests that the gap between the two structures be reduced the most extend practicable. The USEPA requests FDOT incorporate BMPs and investigate new technology that may be available for bridge inspection which would reduce the gap distance between the structures.

3.2.2.2.4.1 Bridge Typical Section (pg 3.25) The DEIS states, “One of the sidewalks may be eliminated to further reduce bridge width and shading effects.” The USEPA concurs that one sidewalk should be eliminated to reduce environmental impacts.

3.2.3.6 Tunnel Alternative (pg 3.55) Please change EPA to USEPA in this section in order to be consistent with the USEPA acronym used throughout the document.

5.1.1.5.1 Residential Relocation and Displacement Impacts (pgs 5.24 to 5.28) The DEIS uses the review of the U.S. Census tract data for residential displacement proposes. Please identify the U.S. Census tract data year being used in the DEIS or update with the new 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data in the FEIS.

7.2.1 Natural Environment (pg 7.4) The DEIS states, “If a build alternative is selected, further minimization may include, but not limited to, design changes and adjustments in the alignment. Other minimization strategies include:” Please add to list of strategies that one of the sidewalks may be eliminated to further reduce bridge width and shading effects. In addition, the USEPA believes further minimization efforts can be accomplished by removing or reducing the size of the inside shoulder on the bridge structures.